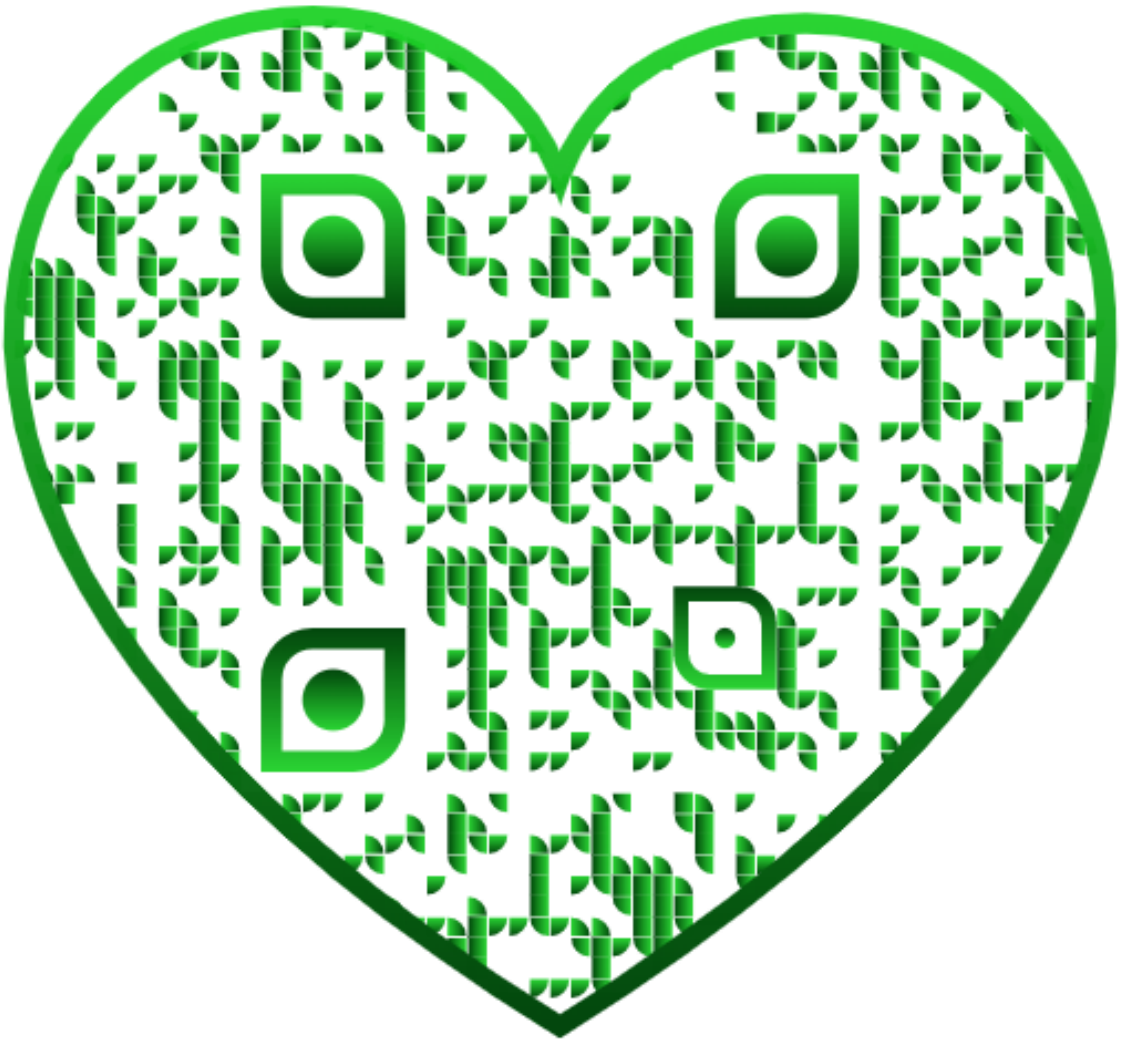
1 Giugno 1980

Piazza Maggiore – Bologna

CLASH

abstracts tratti da “Non disperdetevi” di Oderso Rubini e Andrea Tinti



Il concerto dei Clash in Piazza Maggiore è stato l'inizio per tanti musicisti e per tanti giovani, che si sono avvicinati per la prima volta ad un genere musicale. La piazza era piena e tra il pubblico c'erano tantissimi adolescenti. Quel live colpì pure noi, che eravamo già un po' smaliziati, figuriamoci che impatto ebbe sui giovanissimi. Segnò la vita di tanti.

Saverio Pasotti – Chitarra Wind Open

Lavorai alla realizzazione dell'iniziativa voluta da Zangheri in stretta collaborazione e in piena sintonia con la squadra costituita da Mauro Felicori. La rassegna RITMICITTA' culminò in un concerto in Piazza Maggiore destinato a suscitare, come ho già ricordato, molte polemiche. Il momento di maggior richiamo fu l'esibizione dei Clash, complesso che ci venne indicato da Massimo Buda, il nostro critico musicale; ma ovviamente cercammo di coinvolgere nella eassegna anche i gruppi bolognesi. Band nate in aperta contestazione con l'amministrazione comunale salivano sul palco di una manifestazione organizzata dal Comune. Eravamo consapevoli della scelta artistica un po' "al limite" che gruppi come i Clash rappresentavano, ma anche questo si collocava nel solco che poi avremmo percorso negli anni successivi.

Walter Vitali – Sindaco di Bologna

il Comune organizzò il concerto dei Clash in Piazza Maggiore, che forse non hanno mai suonato, durante tutta la loro carriera, in una cornice così suggestiva. Era la rivolta musicale britannica regalata su un piatto d'argento, per far capire ai ragazzi quanto il Comune fosse loro vicino.

Gianni Gherardi – Giornalista

Per un bolognese l'11 marzo '77 e la strage alla stazione di Bologna sono certamente i momenti più bui di quegli anni, di contro i Clash in Piazza Maggiore sono da ricordare come un momento di luce ed hanno avuto un significato esclusivamente politico: si è trattato infatti del primo grande evento organizzato dal Comune dopo i disordini del '77. Chiamando i Clash, il gruppo di punta del punk e paladino di tante lotte, si tentò di riappacificarsi con i giovani: tentativo che si realizzò a metà. Ma fu in ogni caso un gran concerto.

Steno – Nabat

Ad un certo punto il Comune ci diede i Clash, “aggratisse”, in Piazza Maggiore. Un maestrale colpo “Zangheropolese”. Dove altro “il governo della citta’” ti passa la rivoluzione, la punta di diamante della ribellione punk, a portar la street credibility a mille??? A parte Joe Strummer e la t-shirt “Brigade Rosse” (l’ho gia’ detto che gli inglesi sono sintatticamente ignoranti verso le altre lingue), noi sapevamo che i Clash non erano affatto la rivoluzione, ma un meraviglioso business in casa CBS, oltre che il perfetto esempio della moderazione compromissoria PCIsta, per cui.... Per cui sabotammo il concerto, quasi spaccammo in due la scena nascente confliggendo con i punks meno politicizzati che arrivarono da ogni parte d’Italia, però il testo del mio volantino di rivendicazione a nome BO Punx fu pubblicato integralmente su ‘Ciao 2001’ (mai capito il perché ma andò stramegabenissimo così), e quindi si diffuse la notizia che a Bologna la scena punk non era calci sputi e spille da balia ma, apriti cielo, “anarchica e politicizzata”!!!!

Helena Velena

http://www.slowcult.com/musica-2/eventi-musica-2/the-clash-in-concert-–-piazza-maggiore-–-bologna-1-giugno-1980

RETRO': The Clash in concert - Bologna, Piazza Maggiore 1 giugno 1980
Fine maggio 1980, gli esami di maturità si avvicinano, la voglia di studiare si allontana, e allora cosa si fa? Si parte!!!!Quale migliore occasione del concerto di Lou Reed ai giardini delle Cascine per visitare una città d'arte come Firenze? Ci eravamo già persi Patti Smith nel settembre dell'anno prima, stavolta non potevamo mancare. Porca miseria, però il biglietto costa 4000 lire….Che peccato dover rinunciare, ma a diciott'anni eravamo particolarmente scannati…All'improvviso però, una notizia sconvolgente ci giunse alle orecchie: i grandissimi Clash avrebbero suonatoG R A T I S il 2 giugno a Piazza Maggiore a Bologna!!!!

Riccardo, che aveva il giradischi migliore, aveva appena comprato 'London Calling', il doppio LP appena uscito e me l'aveva subito copiato su cassetta. La sensazione già dal primo ascolto fu quella di trovarsi di fronte ad un vero capolavoro. I punk della prima ora storcevano però la bocca: dopo aver ingoiato il rospo di vedere i loro paladini sotto contratto per una Major come la Epic/Sony, i suoni molto ricercati ed una visione della musica più ampia rispetto agli inizi apparivano una sorta di tradimento dei loro ideali.Noi invece il punk lo vedevamo principalmente come un siluro lanciato contro il rock più tradizionale, a volte barocco, dei supergruppi di fine anni '70 come Pink Floyd, Genesis e simili. Avevamo immediatamente recepito, accolto e condiviso l'ondata di fresca energia rappresentata dai Clash, apprezzandone subito la genuina capacità di

trasmettere emozioni miscelata a tematiche sociali e politiche che ci trovavano pienamente d'accordo.

In realtà a nostro avviso i Clash non sono mai stati realmente punk; ne condividevano certamente le valenze culturali, la scelta di sfrondare il rock degli orpelli e dei fronzoli che lo avevano appesantito nella prima meta degli anni settanta, respingevano la psichedelia e tutto ciò che di fricchettone era presente nell'aria, ma dal punto di vista musicale erano anni luce distanti dalla rozzezza e dall'eccessiva linearità rumorosa della maggior parte dei gruppi punk.Approfittando del ponte per la festa della repubblica e abbandonando con particolare piacere il libro di trigonometria ed i poeti romantici dell'ottocento, decidemmo di partire un giorno prima del concerto, dormire sotto i portici, visitare una città certamente artisticamente meno allettante di Firenze, ma sicuramente molto più stimolante dal punto di vista ambientale ed urbano, la città simbolo dell' Emilia rossa, del Dams, di Radio Alice e delle osterie di fuori porta…per poi goderci il concerto gratuito dei Clash. Quale migliore maniera per prepararci alla maturità?All'epoca di concerti importanti ne capitavano un paio l'anno, quasi mai a Roma, già da allora vera periferia dell'impero. Non potevamo di certo mancare a quello che si preannunciava come il concerto dell'anno con la band del momento, meglio partire in anticipo.Racimolando gli spiccioli necessari a coprire il solo biglietto ferroviario di andata (per il ritorno si vedrà, colletta o autostop?), partimmo di buon mattino per giungere nel primo pomeriggio alla stazione di Bologna, che di lì a due mesi esatti sarebbe stata distrutta dalle bombe fasciste causando una strage con decine di morti e centinaia di feriti.

Al nostro arrivo, una sfilza di cartelloni elettorali ci accolse all'esterno della stazione (non a caso l'amministrazione comunale aveva sponsorizzato il concerto proprio durante la campagna elettorale). Uno di questi manifesti annunciava che il giorno 2 giugno alle ore 20.00 in Piazza Maggiore avrebbe parlato il compagno Pietro Longo del partito socialdemocratico…in poche parole sembrava evidente che le informazioni che avevamo sul concerto dei Clash erano sbagliate e che il concerto dei Clash era ormai per noi svanito.A parte un paio di riviste specializzate (Ciao 2001, Rockerilla e poco altro) e le prime radio private, non c'erano altre fonti di informazione che ci potessero aggiornare sul panorama musicale dell'epoca e probabilmente il passaparola ci aveva riportato una notizia errata, o per lo meno imprecisa.Lo choc di questa scoperta ci paralizzò per alcuni interminabili minuti, poi, non volendoci arrendere all'evidenza, ci incamminammo comunque verso il centro senza avere il coraggio di guardarci negli occhi, né di aprire bocca. Dopo pochi passi scorgemmo un manifesto sul marciapiede di fronte, con sopra delle facce e delle chitarre a noi familiari che pubblicizzava 'The Clash in concert'!!Ci avvicinammo per leggerne i dettagli e scoprimmo che il concerto era stato organizzato per il primo giugno. Ancora storditi e amareggiati, non ci rendemmo subito conto che in realtà eravamo casualmente partiti in tempo utile e che il concerto si sarebbe svolto poche ore dopo! Una volta capito la fortuna capitataci, felici e risorti come Lazzaro, ci precipitammo nella vicina Piazza Maggiore dove sopra un enorme palco, che occupava il alto corto della piazza, si affaccendavano decine di ragazzi che stavano allestendo amplificatori, altoparlanti e strumenti vari.

Essendo molto presto, decidemmo di fare un giretto, senza allontanarci troppo. Improvvisamente ci accorgemmo che le strade attorno alla piazze si stavano riempiendo di strani personaggi, che fino ad allora avevamo visto solo nelle foto delle riviste di cui sopra: decine di chiome variopinte o maculate, guance forate con spille da balia, giubbotti di pelle, anfibi ed un ragazzo dalla cresta arancione talmente alta che non riusciva ad entrare nella cabina per fare una telefonata!!! L'atmosfera era sicuramente eccitante ed inconsueta, ma l'intensificarsi del movimento attorno al luogo del concerto ci spinse ad avvicinarci al palco e trascorrere il resto del pomeriggio ad assistere ai preparativi in prima fila. Verso le sette iniziarono a suonare un paio di gruppi spalla, tra cui un gruppo di Firenze in stile simil Police il cui bassista e front-man di lì a pochi anni sarebbe diventato famoso col nome di Raf. Entrambe le band vennero accolte a sputi, non come segno di disapprovazione, ma perché lo sputo era considerato una forma di comunicazione ed un simbolo distintivo della cultura punk. Intorno alle dieci, ora prevista per il clou della serata, la pioggia iniziò a cadere e rendere ancora più snervante l'attesa; scoprimmo poi dai giornali che i Clash, provenienti da una serata in Costa Azzurra, avendo l'abitudine di arrivare ai concerti separatamente, si erano persi per strada Topper Headon, il batterista. Dopo un'altra esasperante mezzora, essendo ormai la situazione ingovernabile nella piazza stracolma di gente, gli altri tre decidono di salire comunque sul palco, sostenuti dal batterista del gruppo spalla.Ed ecco che all'improvviso smette di piovere ed il pubblico, travolto dal treno in corsa di 'Clash City Rockers', inizia a pogare ed ondeggiare vertiginosamente: trascinati da questo mare umano in tempesta, ci spostavamo rapidamente da un estremo all'alto del palco, perché era impossibile restare fermi. Dopo un paio di brani decidemmo di retrocedere di un paio di file, per poter assistere un po' più tranquillamente (?) al concerto. Finalmente fu possibile concentrarci su ciò che avveniva sul palco: Mick Jones corre e salta in lungo ed il largo imbracciando la sua Gibson Melody Maker, Paul Simon, gigante col suo basso Fender all'altezza delle ginocchia, ondeggia dolcemente ed appare più statuario e

dinoccolato; Joe Strummer, con la sua voce al vetriolo, urla al mondo ai suoi piedi le sue storie di periferie urbane, accompagnandosi con la sua Telecaster decorata da adesivi colorati e stelle a cinque punte. Dopo un paio di brani arriva anche Topper Headon, riuscito fortunatamente a divincolarsi dalle trappole delle autostrade attorno a Bologna ed il concerto decolla definitivamente.

Non è facile descrivere le nostre sensazioni, ma di certo posso ammettere che l'emozione, la carica e l'energia emanata da quel palco e che veniva riversata sul pubblico come un fiume in piena, l'avrei ritrovata poche altre volte nella mia trentennale esperienza di concerti. I brani si susseguivano senza sosta, solo il tempo di un veloce cambio di chitarra, brani che a breve sarebbero entrati di diritto nella storia del rock: Clampdown, Police and Thieves, Train In Vain, Guns of Brixton in cui Joe Strummer suona il basso per cedere la chitarra ed il microfono a Paul Simonon.Da qualche parte ho letto che la maggior parte delle rock band hanno a malapena un front-man, mentre i Clash ne avevano tre. Concordo pienamente con questa affermazione, senza però sottovalutare le grandi doti di Topper Headon, sicuramente una solida base su cui gli altri tre poggiavano la costruzione dei loro brani.Dopo due ore e mezza di grande musica, di salti, di ritmi reggae e di brividi, il concerto finisce e con i miei amici ci scambiammo sguardi complici e sorrisi smaglianti, ancora increduli per essere riusciti ad assistere ad uno spettacolo incredibile ed indimenticabile.Stremati da una serata così emozionante, decidemmo di rientrare immediatamente, prendendo un treno notturno, senza fare i biglietti, sperando di confonderci con i tanti ragazzi provenienti dal centro-sud che affollavano i vagoni. Dopo meno di ventiquattrore, eravamo di nuovo a casa, ma niente per noi sarebbe stato lo stesso. Eravamo cresciuti, volevamo cambiare le nostre vite grazie alla musica, grazie ai Clash.Di lì a meno di un anno li avrei rivisti a Firenze in concerto, per un'altra memorabile serata nella tournèe 'Mission impossibile tour 81' di presentazione dell'altro capolavoro 'Sandinista !', ma il ricordo di questa prima volta e

le particolari vicende legate a questo concerto hanno fatto passare in secondo piano anche la grandezza della serata di Firenze.Sono passati quasi 28 anni, ho smesso da tempo di suonare e la vita mi ha portato altrove, ma se a distanza di così tanto tempo il ricordo di quel concerto è ancora così vivo e presente, se la mia passione per la musica, la voglia di parlarne e di condividerla è ancora così forte dopo tanto tempo, è proprio perché le sue radici partono da una serata speciale di inizio estate del lontanissimo 1980.Se poi nelle sale cinematografiche viene oggi proiettato un docufilm su Joe Strummer **[Joe Strummer: Il futuro non è scritto]**, se ancora esistono fanzine e pubblicazioni che affermano orgogliose che 'Punk is Attitude not Fashion', vuol dire che forse per certi versi il 1980 non è così lontano. The future is unwritten, but the past is present to be written!

Articolo by Fabrizio

NB. Le foto del concerto sono state scattate con una Zenith comprata a Porta Portese dai russi, la qualità non è delle migliori , ma le ritengo comunque funzionali ad una migliore fruizione del racconto.

26 February 2008

http://www.radioclash.it/testi/miscellaneous/clash_bologna80_mucchio.htm

DAL MUCCHIO SELVAGGIO (luglio-agosto '80)

THE CLASH Bologna 01/06/1980

Gli anni '80 hanno portato agli appassionati del "nuovo rock" molti concerti di band assai note in campo internazionale.
Dopo Ramones, Police e Damned anche i famigerati Clash hanno voluto "onorarci" di una breve tournee con un meraviglioso live-show tenuto gratuitamente a Bologna, reso ancora più suggestivo dall'accattivante sfondo delle storiche costruzioni di Piazza Maggiore. La folla presente, che aveva cominciato ad affluire nella piazza fin dalle prime ore del mattino raggiungeva il suo culmine verso le 18; alcuni punks bolognesi distribuivano volantini in cui contestavano la svolta musicale operata dai Clash nel loro ultimo album ed avevano addirittura preparato uno striscione con la scritta "PUNK IS CRASS? NOT CLASH", provocando reazioni piuttosto accese da parte di altri punks che, pur non approvando il cambiamento della band, avevano sempre un atteggiamento di rispetto nei suoi confronti. Erano presenti punks di tutta Italia:si notavano in mezzo alla folla pettinature e tinte tipiche, catene, spille, giubbotti di pelle, pantaloni e scarpe assai strane. Si profilava all'orizzonte uno spettacolo indimenticabile.

I due gruppi di supporto non ottengono i consensi del pubblico: né i Cafè Caracas (una copia casereccia dei Police) né i peraltro discreti Whirlewind riescono ad evitare di ricevere sputi, fischi e lattine vuote invece degli applausi sperati. L'attesa, fra spinte e calcioni per assicurarsi i posti migliori si è fatta snervante; ogni tanto saliva sul palco un pittoresco punk con uno spazzolino da cesso in mano per liberare da lattine e cartacce l'area destinata ai musicisti. Ore 22,30 il momento tanto atteso: Joe Strummer e compagni fanno il loro ingresso scusandosi per il ritardo, dovuto all'assenza di Nicky Headon (non ancora arrivato), sostituito da un batterista sconosciuto. Pochi istanti ed è subito "Clash City rockers" suonata con violenza inaudita, mentre i punks in delirio seguono urlando la voce di Joe. Dopo è la volta di "Guns of Brixton", "Jimmy Jazz", "London Calling", "Jail guitars doors", tutte pessimamente suonate dallo sconosciuto distruttore di tamburi, meno male che i tre veri Clash sono in vena, altrimenti…

Finalmente Nicky Headon prende posto dietro il suo strumento. Il concerto continua con "Spanish Bombs", "I Fought the Law",

"Clampdown", "Koka Kola", una meravigliosa versione di "Train in Vain", "Stay free", "English civil war", "All the young punks", "I'm so bored with the U.S.A.", "Guns on the roof" ed infine "Police & Thieves"; il tutto suonato ad un livello veramente elevato, con il pulsare compatto e violento del basso di Paul Simonon, il cantare roco e potente di Joe Strummer, lo "strimpellare" incisivo di Mick Jones, il battere costante di Nicky Headon, un batterista invidiabile per precisione e padronanza dello strumento. Le luci si spengono, si levano urla di disapprovazione, i punks vogliono ancora i Clash, vogliono ballare, far casino, e le loro richieste vengono ben presto esaudite. A tutta birra "Armagideon Time" e "Tommy Gun", con Mick Jones a saltare fra i compagni in uno sfogo totale e completo che coinvolge tutta la platea dei punks. Troppo bello per durare! Ancora una volta si spengono le luci: ormai nessuno spera in un ulteriore bis, ma i Clash si ripresentano ancora al loro pubblico, che scoppia in un incontenibile urlo di gioia, spaccando la chitarra, sembra ormai letteralmente posseduto dal demonio, ed infine "White Riot", suonata allo stremo delle forze dai 4 musicisti che si congedano dal loro pubblico bolognese con un saluto che forse vuol dire un arrivederci.

Luci spente e molta sconsolatezza per la conclusione accompagnano l'esodo del pubblico verso le più disparate direzioni: nessuno, credo, riuscirà facilmente a dimenticare quell'ora e quaranta di sogno.

Stefano Lenti

http://www.radioclash.it/testi/miscellaneous/clash_live_italy.htm

"THE CLASH - LIVE IN BOLOGNA - Piazza Maggiore - 1.6.1980"

Testo di Ernesto De Pascale (Tratto dal sito www.ilpopolodelblues.com)

Fa caldo oggi per essere solo il primo di giugno, qui a Bologna e, radunati in migliaia in piazza Maggiore, a due passi dalle torri degli asinelli, siamo in piedi già da tanto. Poco importa però! L'evento è di quelli destinati a passare alla storia , almeno per quelli che, come noi, di eventi ne vivono pochi, visto, per di più, che i confini musicali italiani si sono riaperti solo meno di nove mesi fa con i concerti di Patti Smith, a Firenze e proprio qui a Bologna. Questa è la città che da un paio di anni almeno, con le sue cantine di San Vitale ha rimesso sulla carta la parola rock e non solo quella. Il fermento locale ha naturalmente portato i più volonterosi a diventare promoter di concerti anche internazionali. La voce di questi ragazzi è Radio Alice. Oggi siamo arrivati un po' da tutte le parti d'Italia; molte faccie già le conosco : quello è Rupert viene da Genova, laggiù riconosco i Windopen con i riccioli di Roberto Terzani ed il sorriso di Toccia, li ho visti dal vivo al Bussola Domani alle Nocette meno di un mese fa, poi Enrico Ruggeri con i suoi capelli color peroxide e gli occhiali con la montatura bianca, un tipo coi capelli rossi che si fa chiamare Red Ronnie, un po' più grande di noi che gira con tre macchine fotografiche, molti fiorentini, Daniele Locchi e Claudio Gherardini li riconosco subito, ma con loro ve ne sono altri.

Sul palco i Cafè Caracas hanno già terminato da un po'; il loro set è stato disastrato dalla pessima qualità sonora, poi mi diranno che i tecnici avevano chiesto loro mille dollari per accendere i monitor. I Cafè Caracas sono della mia città, Firenze, perciò sono bravissimi (alla chitarra Ghigo Renzulli futuro Litfiba ? n.d.r.) ed hanno un singolo che è in programmazione su Radio Montecarlo; Awanagana lo suona tutti i giorni, una versione punk di "Tintarella di Luna", ma oggi hanno girato a vuoto. Un po' perché era presto, un po' perché tutti smaniano per Joe Strummer ed i suoi Clash. Il gruppo è già un mito da un po' e qui da noi la possibilità di vedere veri punk non ce ne sono poi tante, se esclusi gli UK Subs e chi per loro. A Sud di Milano non scendono certo. Non ci sono soldi, non ci sono certezze che i locali possano accogliere questi riottosi giovani inglesi. Ecco perché quello di oggi è e resterà un evento e l'aria calda si fa serrata, stizzosa, irrespirabile. Il gruppo spalla, Whirlwind, è già tornato nell'anonimato che un'aria di diffidenza inizia a farsi strada dalle prime file al fondo della vasta piazza; Topper Headon, il controverso batterista del gruppo pare si sia perso per strada, questo e quello che si sente dire in giro. I 4 della formazione pare girino in mezzi separati (forse si odiano? A qualcuno viene in mente questo…) e il nostro, di provenienza dalla costa azzurra come il resto del gruppo, pare, non riesca a trovare Bologna. Impossibile, penso io, le cartine stradali le fanno apposta ! Se ciò non bastasse pare anche, pare, che Joe Strummer voglia suonare indossando una maglia con lo stemma delle Brigate Rosse e sempre pare, che il sindaco stia sudando le fatidiche sette camicie per dissuaderlo. Pare, ancora pare, che ci vorranno seimila dollari per dissuaderlo. Vera o falsa che sia la notizia essa fa tanto rok'n'roll e tutti la fagocitano.

Finalmente qualcuno decide a dare il via al concerto; la gente rumoreggia, si fa tardi, siamo più o meno tutti stanchi ma sarà questione di un attimo per riprendersi. Il tempo di vederli sul palco che la gente è

tutta in piedi e sotto il palco. Mick Jones ha una tuta bianca da meccanico, Simonon un giubbotto di jeans senza maniche, Strummer una maglietta, ma non quella delle Brigate Rosse!, e, ahimè, al posto di Topper Headon, siede il batterista del gruppo spalla. I punk italiani erano anni che aspettavano questo momento. Si comincia male; per tutti è una mezza delusione, la gente si guarda stranita nonostante alcuni brani da "London Calling" siano l'urlo delle masse e Strummer impersonifichi il vero "Working Class Hero" di lennoniana memoria. Si capisce che c'è voglia di far restare il concerto a futura memoria ma l'oggettività dei fatti è quella descritta. Il gruppo non gira, grazie, dirà qualcuno, il batterista non sa i pezzi !! e Jones è completamente ubriaco. Al settimo brano della scaletta spunta Topper ed è un boato. Strummer senza mezzi termini decide il da farsi. Si riparte da capo! Ecco i veri Clash, la piazza che fino a quel momento ondeggiava indecisa ma con lo spirito positivo descritto, esplode. E il gruppo con loro; suonano con rabbia e , penso, per motivi molto lontani da quelli che noi possiamo supporre : le loro risse, le lotte intestine, la voglia di leadership di Mick Jones e Joe Strummer più volte è stata motivo di aperti dissapori, i problemi con l'eroina di Headon, la scontentezza di Sino mon nei confronti degli altri ed il suo amore per il reggae e il dub, un manageriato fallace ed un pessimo rapporto con i discografici rendono i Clash un gruppo unico, una formazione che mostra apertamente la matrice rock&roll "classica" (matrice che verrà ancor più allo scoperto negli anni a venire) e che le proprie performance cariche di passione è in grado di far dimenticare certe pochezze tecniche. Terminerà così , come la serata che le migliaia di ragazzi accorsi da tutte le città d'Italia si attendevano e segnerà una pietra miliare per il nascente nuovo rock italiano. I Clash quella sera avrebbero dato la spinta a tanti giovani di provarci, aldilà dei mezzi e dei risultati, convincendo molti dei gruppi delle cantine di San Vitale di venire definitivamente allo scoperto, dimostrando come l'attitudine sia più importante di ogni altra cosa. Il gruppo lascerà il palco sbraitando ed offendendosi fra loro, Mick Jones semi svenuto, mentre verranno fermati alcuni tentativi di invasione con Sinomon a difendere la postazione col basso a mò d'ascia. Le faccie attonite dei presenti sono indimenticabili. Per i Clash sarà solo un giorno nella loro vita burrascosa, per noi molto di più. Nessuno poteva immaginare che da lì a poco il gruppo ci avrebbe stupito ancora di più.

http://homepage.mac.com/blackmarketclash/Bands/Clash/recordings/1980/80-06-01_Bologna/80-06-01_Bologna.html

Free Open Air Concert

This one has everything! A free open air concert in front of 30,000 people for the Italian Communist Party in the historic and beautiful Piazza Maggiore. Add to that a missing Topper, a replacement drummer for 8 songs who had never played them before, inter band tensions, stage invasions and a ferocious aural assault dominated by lead guitar swamped in effects played by an inebriated Mick who managed to knock himself out with his guitar during the final chaotic climax of White Riot.

Italian Rockerilla magazine

This amazing night is documented by eyewitness accounts, a great 4 page Italian Rockerilla magazine article, an Italian TV show (audio dub only circulating at present sadly) and last but no means least a soundboard recording. The good people of Bologna had never seen anything like it. The concert has legendary status in Italy; it inspired many new bands in Bologna and was cited by many Italian contributors to Joe's obituaries as a life-changing event.

A big thanks...

A huge thank you to Ezio Fara (Evair), Gabriele Savioli, and Ferrucio Martinotti for their invaluable recollections of the gig and for translations of the Rockerilla article. The excellent Italian website radioclash.it has a review of the Bologna gig and a big thank you to them for allowing some of its content to be included here. **The Italian Communist Party and The Clash**

The free public concert (Ritmicita) was organised by the Bologna city council and local musical cooperatives. However as the council was run by the PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano) it was not unreasonably seen as part of the PCI's campaign for the elections to be held a week later.

> Italy at that period in particular was a land of strong political confrontations. Italy was a key outpost of the Cold War, because it bordered with Yugoslavia, is close to the Middle East, and had the most powerful and influential Communist Party in the Western Hemisphere (mainly because communists had led the armed Resistance and helped kick the Nazis out of the country). Hidden powers of all sorts fought dirty wars in Italy after the fall of the Fascist regime. In 1948 the CIA and the Vatican did all they could to make the Christian Democrat Party win the national election, they even allegedly staged "appearances" of the Virgin Mary all across Southern Italy. It goes without saying that Our Lady warned people to vote against the People's Front [the coalition of socialists and communists]. That was the beginning of the so-called "K Factor", which meant the Italian Communist Party had to be kept out of national government, in spite of getting more than the 30% of

votes (and keeping them well into the 1980's). The PCI was not an uptight Stalinist party, it was a popular party that shared some features with North-European Social Democracy and based its politics upon "cultural hegemony", a concept devised by the party's founder Antonio Gramsci, one of the most brilliant and inspirational Marxist thinkers of the 20th Century, who died in a Fascist penitentiary in 1937. The PCI, unlike its brother parties in Western Europe, tugged sharply at the umbilical cord and got ever more independent of the USSR. This process started in the late 1960's and ended in 1982 with what became renowned as "lo Strappo", The Tearing. At least one third of the country, including the region Emilia Romagna, whose capital is Bologna - had communist local administrations. The biggest Italian trade union, CGIL [Italian General Federation of Labour, which still has a membership of 5 million workers], was very close to the PCI. The Clash although drawn no doubt by the much needed cash fee for playing ($6000 was rumoured) were also surely attracted and fascinated by the political stance of this event. Certainly Joe talked in those terms in the Rockerilla interview and explained his political views and his attitude now to the Red Brigades and Red Army Faction that he had been previously both attracted and repelled by. The Clash in Bologna were now in the centre of all that tension, extreme right and left wing were very strong and concerts often hosted confrontations between young gangs, not only for political reasons. In 1980 a bomb in Bologna railway station killed 80 people. The Clash played several more times for the PCI, in 1984 without Mick and Joe played for them again on the Earthquake Weather tour. The Clash became a symbol of the PCI, due to the fact they were one of a few rock bands at that time with left wing leanings and had songs of socio-political content. The Italian press started to refer to The Clash, as a political and leftist group. The Clash became very popular in Italy with the communist community, and the leftist opposition in general. **The wait, where's Topper and who's that?!**

As is appropriate for events that have become legendary with the passing of time, accounts of the event differ particularly as to why Topper went missing and who stepped into the drum seat in his absence. It is fair to assume that relations within the band at the time were at best tense. Enjoying a few days off on the coast after their French dates they chose to travel separately by car to Bologna. It was apparent even to those watching the Bologna gig from the band member's stage positions and interactions that all was not well.

The Rockerilla article paints an amusing picture of a stressed out CBS man exasperated at the band's unorthodox approach to touring; no stretch limos for these rock stars! They all managed to get lost and all arrived after they were supposed to be on stage, first Joe, then Mick and Paul. In the bands defence it appears their performance had been scheduled a day later but due to the double booking of the PCI's main speaker it was brought forward. The eager audience of up to 30,000 people in the square, had seen the two support bands, Café Caracas (from Florence) and Whirlwind (English rockabilly band) come and go and were getting increasingly impatient. Rumours about the band's whereabouts grew. Even

today it's not clear what happened to Topper. One account had him lost in Parma another that he was sick on seafood (in Bologna?!) After nearly 2 hours of reggae playing through the PA the mood amongst the audience was getting ugly, stoked by the presence of anti-Clash young Bolognese Crass fans calling themselves the RAF Punks. Joe, Mick and Paul decided they had better start the show using the drummer of a support band. Most accounts have him as the drummer from Whirlwind. Another account has him as the drummer from the other support band, Café Caracas. This would appear to be right as Joe name checks the batterista as Mr George but Whirlwind's drummer was Phil 'Foghorn' Hardy and then in 1980 Gary Hassett (of course the singer of Whirlwind, Nigel Dixon became mates with Paul through their Clash support dates, later teaming up to form Havana 3AM). Also the photos from the concert in Rockerilla show (apart from one of Topper) a longhaired drummer, and it's hard to believe that a rockabilly band like Whirlwind would have had a longhaired drummer. Mr George played on the first 8 songs and although he was to be congratulated for helping out he was unable to do little more than add an unvarying beat behind most songs. When Topper did take over to play on White Man all the accounts describe how the concert really exploded into life and this is also very apparent from the soundboard recording. Some accounts have Joe deciding to repeat all the songs so far played when Topper arrives but this from the evidence of the soundboard recording definitely was not the case. Paul also evidently talked surprisingly in Italian to the audience, something that surprised Joe and Mick too. All the reports say how the band played with a lot of power and anger setting the audience on fire. People who attended both Bologna and Torino concerts said that the energy and passion of Piazza Maggiore was much more intense. Certainly for those lucky enough to witness the first Clash concert in Italy, the experience was unforgettable, "people in completely different situations, who don't care much about music now, talk about the Clash in Piazza Maggiore and say "Hey, I was there!" **Venue**

The beautiful Piazza Maggiore is the main square of Bologna, built in 1200. The main buildings of political and religious power are situated all around it. The Piazza has always been the place where the main community events are held. See photos including one showing a communist political rally in the square.

Soundboard Sound Quality

Several tapes ciculate but they all emintate from the same source. Some claim to be the master, but are in fact inferior. The best tape by far is a low generation soundboard recording which is complete except for an edit losing the last third of London's Burning and all of White Riot. It does have several flaws though; its not mixed so guitars dominate with vocals a little too far back in the mix. There is some distortion too but this probably originates from the concert itself where the sound was reportedly distorted, rather than the recording.

But as it's a soundboard source all the instrumentation is clear, including a good bass. There is a good range of sound and clarity. It is probably from a 1st or 2nd generation source, lesser quality recordings also circulate. The lesser tapes can be identified by edits between some songs whereas the best one has no between edits.

Check after Guns of Brixton where there should be 15 seconds of crowd and some guitar tuning. This is cut out on the lesser tapes. Also after Complete Control which should run for about 35 seconds between that and Armagideon Time. On the lesser tape it is cut and is about 5 seconds.

An upgrade to the master would make a significant improvement.

It is despite its faults a very enjoyable recording indeed capturing the power, intensity and distorted guitar dominating attack. Crank up the volume and relive this legendary concert!

TV Show

RAI (national Italian television) showed a 20-minute item on the concert with live footage and an interview with band members. A number of Italian contributors remember seeing the programme, which also included an item on Joe Jackson.

Other evidence that it was on TV item rather than radio is that the songs are not introduced like a radio announcer would and also Gabriele recognises the voice of the interviewer, as a famous Italian journalist Gianni Minà who always worked on TV. As the footage was never rebroadcast no video copies circulate. A great shame as the live footage would be explosive. The search for it continues with Evair pursuing contacts in the Italian media. **Audio Dub from the video**

An audio dub from the show does circulate, suggesting that it must have been taken from a video recording. However it is more likely that it was recorded with a microphone held up to the TV during the actual broadcast in 1980. The recording would suggest this as the volume does fluctuate at times. The sound quality is good though mainly left channel and must be from the master or very close to it. It is professionally mixed with the vocals high in the mix unlike the soundboard recording but has a thinner less engaging sound on the live material than the soundboard. The cleaner sound does not capture the intensity, the mayhem and the volume and distortion that the soundboard with its faults manages to convey. It is definitely from the Bologna concert as the live adlibs match the soundboard source and both have Mick shouting at the end of Bored With The USA "Down with the USA and all imperialist scum!" **Gabriele has kindly provided the following translation of the TV show.** Safe European Home (complete) Q : What does it mean to you to play rock? Joe : Just means having something to do Q : Your political involvement goes back before you formed the band or did you discover it when you got together? Joe : I think it's something we developed together. In the beginning, before meeting the Clash, I played American rhythm'n'blues, something like "Shake your hips", then when we got together our manager told us to sing only about

things that matter, so we followed that line. Q : And what is the yardstick to say which things matter and which not? Joe : Well, we hadn't any money, so we knew very well what mattered for us, we went deeply into the reasons why it was so difficult to get enough money Q : When you became famous, people gave you a political label, you started to mean something to them Topper : Somebody told us we were representing something, but young people in Britain, didn't look to us in a political way, we were only representing what they were trying to reach, we were representing the freedom to think for yourself, with your own mind. White Man in Hammersmith Palais (excerpt) London Calling to the faraway town……. (The commentator translates the lyrics of London Calling, over the live music of White Man!) Q : What is you political message, how would you define it? Left wing, right wing or what? Mick : But it can be identified with the working people, because this is the world we live in honey, this is the way we live, social politics, not socialism: Everybody try to revolt when is covered with shit, that's what we are talking about: justice for all, the end of cruelty and injustice. Every political party is full of shit, all the parties have the same message but people don't understand this, it takes many years to realise the real situation. We cannot do much but play, in our songs we talk about our life. We talk to a lot of people with an average life and we tell them to take action: to form a band and sing what you have got on your mind, like we did. Q : Do you know that the simple fact you came and play here in Bologna, invited by the communist party, which runs the Town Hall, is a specific political contribution, just a few days before the political election Mick : We are definitely politically manipulated, but like everybody else, we only came here to play our music. It would be great if in England, our own country, we could do the same; unfortunately we cannot because we live in a right-wing country; today England is a right-wing country and many people vanish. One day an artist has a lot of success, the next day vanishes. Margaret Thatcher is full of shit: I can say it right here right now, but I cannot say it at home because I would not be safe anymore. England is a right wing country so we think Italy is OK to do things like that. We would like to be able to do it in England. [Another example of where Mick should stick to the music and let Joe do the interviews! Mick displays an over the top sense of paranoia, loathsome as Thatcher undoubtedly was, people didn't vanish under her Prime Minister ship unless they were sailing away on the Belgrano!] Q : Why, you cannot play in concert like this in England, for free? Mick : We can't, but we must fight to succeed Guns of Brixton (excerpt) When they kick at your front door……. (The commentator translates the lyrics of The Guns of Brixton) Q : Before you joined the Clash, was there a kind of music particularly significant to you? Something in which you identified, something that inspired you? Joe : For me it's the blues, all black blues. Muddy Water, Howlin' Wolf, Slim Harpo Q : Why the blues? Topper : Because it's the first form of music which talked about the daily sufferance of people. Joe : The blues is the root of any kind of music : ska, bluebeat, reggae, dub too. Black blues Guns of Brixton (2nd excerpt) Q : You are on top for a long time, and you are still playing live a lot. Usually the kind of bands that choose a particular political involvement, after a few years lose their hold on the audience Mick : Yeah, we're

losing our success (joking), we lose our passport, we losing money, we're going down the toilet! Q : What are you trying do to? Where do you aim your anger? Are you trying to talk to desperate people? Joe : All we're trying to do is be true to ourselves, try to respect ourselves, understand? It aint' for those people, it's for us. To live in peace with ourselves. Topper : To wake up in the morning and say : "I'm free", if tomorrow I don't want to go there, nobody can force me, right? And we hope that people that come to our show enjoy themselves and when they go home they try to think like we do. We have no messages like:"This is what you must do", you know what I mean? But I can say "I'm doin' it this way and I'm happy, why don't you try something yourselves?" The Commentator concludes the program talking over some of I'm So Bored With The USA. Complete Control (complete)

The www.radioclash.it review, sets the scene very well; the waiting for hours, recognising others who've come from all over Italy in eager anticipation of both the Clash's first Italian concert and for the majority in the audience their first live experience of a "punk" band. It did not begin well, the sound was poor particularly for the support bands and it was a very warm, humid day. Finally at 10-20pm The Clash without Topper hit the stage, accompanied by a good-natured stage invasion with Centrocelle Clash City Rockers keeping away the hostile punks. The soundboard recording begins here with Joe's announcement "Sorry to keep you waiting. We take a long time to drive". Some booing can be heard and it was reported there was some spitting and can throwing. **Clash City Rockers** kicks things off and it's clear from both Joe and Mick's intense vocals that they are fired up and keen to make up for the delay and Topper's absence. But George can do little more than maintain a constant beat and the song ends abruptly without the "Rock, rock, **Clash City Rockers**" final coda as he doesn't know it.

Joe dressed in black shirt is all "nervous tension, strung like a bow". Paul in a red shirt with braces and a sleeveless denim jacket. Mick in "white mechanics overalls" and reportedly drunk. "For Vince Taylor" intros **Brand New Cadillac** which highlights (as do all these Topper-less performances) the importance of Topper's drumming because although the rest of the band are working really hard the song doesn't really explode. Fascinating and enjoyable nevertheless. Joe then announces "We are sorry, if you can understand me, we've lost our drummer somewhere on the road from France, we hope maybe he comes but until then we have Mr George, OK". Then it's into **Safe European Home** with the twin guitar attack heard really well and intense vocals but again it ends fairly abruptly. "Now we're going to tell the story about Mr Jimmy Jazz". It's a good if not inspired performance with Joe adlibbing around "looking for Mr **Jimmy Jazz**, they had his picture, had his ID. Went down to London Town we got some bad Police" dropping down mid song to just Paul's bass line. "Of course man, did you think we were not going to play that one!" precedes a strong **London Calling** with great 'seagull' screams from Joe and a blistering solo from Mick. Joe's rhythm guitar 'chopping' is really clear. "What are

we going to do now?" says Joe aware that things are not going that well and the audience not responding. "Alright a new singer, Monsieur Paul". Mick's heavy guitar lines dominate a strong **Guns of Brixton**, which reviewers noted was a highlight of the concert. **Train In Vain** next with Mr George adding his own intro, and Mick playing some great guitar over the ending coda. **Spanish Bombs** has some great lead guitar too but Joe's vocals are less intense now but his spirits are lifted as the song fades out with the arrival of Mr Topper Headon. He is greeted by a cheer from the audience and by Joe with "Who's he, who the hell are you!" Mick semi grumbles "After a couple of numbers we gonna change drummers again" to which Joe quickly adds "We wear them out fast! Anyway George thanks a bunch!" Mick shouts an impassioned and echoed "1-2-3-4" and the concert really begins with a superb **White Man In Hammersmith Palais**. It's a tight, charged performance with intense vocals, Mick's great guitar work dominates and Joe adlibs over the ending. Eyewitness accounts state how up until now it had been a half hour of disappointment with the audience wavering undecided. But with Topper's return the Piazza explodes and from then on the audience's reaction matches the intensity of The Clash's performance. The group play with real anger, resolving their internal struggles through the catharsis of performance (as Ian Penman might have put it if he'd been there) Certainly the evidence of the soundboard recording more than backs up these accounts where the new intensity produced by Topper's return is very apparent. **Jail Guitar Doors** is just wild with Joe adlibbing a verse about Topper, which sounds like he says its good to have you back! Joe and Mick literally scream out over the ending. Joe says "God I ask you" and Mick adds "Stop the rain" then launch into maybe the first great live performance of **Somebody Got Murdered**. It's very intense with both Mick and Joe screaming "Murder" over the ending. There's no let up as an intense **Koka Kola** leads into a raging **I Fought The Law**, with Joe particularly animated according to the Rockerilla article.

An edit follows with the recording restarting with the first bars of **48 Hours**. There are problems here with the source tape, losing some of the left channel. Joe's vocals are back in the mix. The sound picks up again for **Protex Blue**, with Mick's playing and singing proving again that he is really fired up (or juiced up!) for this concert. **Police and Thieves** next; "Alright this is a song by a Mr Junior Murvin, Carabineri is the Police" Mick delivers a great solo then guitar distortion drowns out much of Joe's adlibbed vocals, but a powerful performance nevertheless. "Topper!" shouts Joe, and its straight into a great **Bankrobber** dominated by Mick's guitar lines and as usual on this final leg of the tour it's played more with an R'n'B feel than a reggae one. **Clampdown** follows with Mick adding to the "best years of your life they want to steal line "and they will if you let them". There's a great-extended ending with Joe adlibbing around "neutron bombs" and "splitting the atom". "Your turn boss!" says Joe, then Mick says introducing **Stay Free** "Good evening, last verse of this song says we're gonna burn it fuckin' down to a cinder which means for London real trouble but this place here seems pretty cool.. but you don't understand!" Menthol is changed to cannabis resin tonight and Mick's playing over the ending coda is a delight. The intensity now really builds through to the encore with **English Civil**

War starting slowly then explodes with more great playing from Mick. A long gap follows with an impatient Joe shouting "Oy Mick!" before **I'm So Bored With The USA** blasts out across the Piazza Maggiore. Its well worth the wait with Joe adlibbing and Mick adding at the end "Down with the USA and all imperialist scum!" A line that would have gone done well with the event's organisers and somewhat contradicting Mick's recent recollections for MTV retrospectives that the song was only about too many US cop shows on British TV. Topper delivers a drum solo intro into an amazing **Complete Control** with intense guitar solo, "You're my guitar hero" indeed. The song building to a raging, almost out of control ending with Joe screaming over Mick's distorted guitar. The encore quickly followed with **Armagideon Time** on acid! The song is drenched in echo and effects with Joe screaming adlibs over the top about "Soul torture, human torture, baby(?) torture". The performances of this song on the 16 Tons Tour have developed from a reggae song with added Mickey Dread toasting to now a magnificent heavy dub echoed aural assault. As Joe screams Armagideon Time the song fades out and immediately Topper smashes out the intro to **Tommy Gun**. Its raging assault of guitars and distortion, which ends with a spoken "Viva" from Joe. **Garageland** follows, vocals somewhat drowned out by distorted guitar; manic and intense. Energy levels continue to peak on a brilliant **Janie Jones** complete with teased out start. "**London's Burning**" screams out Joe but a great version cuts off before the end. The tape also loses White Riot. Rockerilla describes a scene of Paul smashing his bass, Mick accidentally hitting his head with his unstrapped guitar and then fainting and Joe leaping like a man possessed between Topper's drum kit and the edge of the stage. The article has this as the end of **Complete Control** but its more likely the final scene as White Riot concludes. The intensity of the performance in Bologna overcomes the technical deficiencies of the soundboard recording, making this an essential and hugely enjoyable bootleg. On the evidence of this performance alone, The Clash were in 1980 still very much a punk band, for there can be no other description for the music played on this legendary night in the Piazza Maggiore, Bologna.

"Got to read your excellent articles on their very first Italian gig in Bologna in June 1980. I remember I couldnt get to go to Bologna that day (I live in Cesena, 80 kms far from there) but some friends of mine did and they were amazed." "The reason why Im writing is to tell that a local TV did broadcast one hour of that gig in 1986 or later. As far as I can remember the TV network was Tele SanMarino. We tried to call to ask if/when the concert was eventually rebroadcast but they said it was not scheduled to be broadcast again, but they confirmed the tape was one hour long. We asked them to copy to a VHS for us but they asked 10000 Lire per minute (total amount 300+ € nowadays) so we did give up."

The recording is from the Italian TV show MIXER . The popular journalist Gianni Minà interviewed the Clash I remember that TV show. Mick was completely drunk and some hand-made cigarettes showed up ....

I was just fourteen and it happens very randomly. I was in bologna with my father and our host's son went to see the clash and I went with Him. Never heard of them, never heard about punk rock. It was my first exposure to r'n'r. I was astonished by the brute force and the intensity of the set. In few minute I was a believer! I remember there were some anarco-punks giving flyers against the clash and they were beaten to pulp by some punks from rome called "centocelle city rockers". I haven't too many recollections of the concert because I was in a sort of trance that never happened to me again and I didn't know any of their songs! I remember well the change at the drums when topper arrived. Luca Lanini

Set List

Clash City Rockers
Brand New Cadillac
Safe European Home
Jimmy Jazz
London Calling
The Guns Of Brixton
Train In Vain
Spanish Bombs
White Man In Ham Palais
Jail Guitar Doors
Somebody Got Murdered
Koka Kola
I Fought the Law
48 Hours
Protex Blue
Police and Thieves
Bankrobber
Clampdown
Stay Free
English Civil War
I'm So Bored With the USA
Complete Control
Armagideon Time
Tommy Gun
Garageland
Janie Jones
London's Burning

White Riot (lesser vers.)

MIXER TV Track List

Safe European Home
Gianni Minà int. Joe
White Man in Hammersmith Palais
White Man ... Interview
Guns of Brixton edit
Guns of Brixton ... interview
Guns of Brixton ... cont
Interview ... Bored with the USA
I'm so Bored with the USA ... cont
Complete Control

Rockerilla June 80 Translation I think that this small episode says something about how incredible a rock and roll band The Clash are. I arrived as expected for an exclusive interview, at their hotel in Bologna at about midday on the Sunday on which we had organised (myself as a consultant of the town council of Bologna) their concert in Piazza Maggiore, seizing the opportunity given to them with their brief Italian tour, to finish with an unforgettable free concert in the review "Ritmicità" set up by the community, by Harpo's Bazaar and by other musical co-operatives. Outside the hotel there is a black mini bus, covered in dust and wrecked, with an English number plate. Someone has written with their finger "Grenoble Punks" in the dust. A glance at the inside where in complete disorder there are tins of beer and magazines. On the dashboard there is a tape, "L. A. Women" of the Doors. It makes me laugh, to me it seems a comical and beautiful situation, that a great band like The Clash touring Europe with a mini coach that looks as if it has come out of a film by Wim Wenders or Sam Peckinpah. But in the hotel I get to know that it belongs to some of The Clash's technicians, while John Picard of CBS gloomily throws his arms open wide and declares that he has absolutely no idea where Strummer's group is. But after a while, the truth comes out, and it gives the English group an even more beautiful, more rebellious and absolutely irregular image. In fact at 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon they phone from Nice with assurances that they're hurrying up to get there. But how? Not by plane, or in a coach, but each with their own car, arranging to meet at the site of the next concert, in this case from Nice to Bologna, with the risk of them getting lost. In fact that is what happened, and this explains why The Clash give life every evening on stages all round the world to one of the most intense and overwhelming performances in rock and roll, it's not a coincidence. But which becomes a necessity as soon as the four meet backstage behind the scenes, drink something quickly and then jump to get changed and and get their unstoppable live act going. "They don't ever go to bed before six in the morning after concert" says John Picard and they don't get up in the afternoon before two o'clock. Being on tour with them is incredibly stressful; for them the word "schedule" hasn't got the least bit of meaning. Meanwhile the square is filling up, and groups of youngsters from all over Italy continue to arrive, until at the end there will be thirty-thousand in spite of the changing of the schedule. (Everything has been anticipated by a day because an hour before The Clash, Pietro Longo of the PSDI, is double booked for a meeting causing considerable problems and absolutely not consenting to changing date and place) There's a leaflet

of the RAF Punk;'s going around, a group of young Bolognese punks, fans of Crass and declared enemies of the Damned and stale Clash. They're terribly late. In the meantime Cafe Caracas and Whirlwind start playing, but the wait gets longer and the impatience grows. The first to arrive at about half past nine is Joe Strummer and after a while Mick Jones and Paul Simonon appear, but Topper Headon isn't to be seen. News goes round that he is lost in Parma. The wonderful reggae sent out by the speakers for two hours however, doesn't keep anyone entertained anymore and the Clash decide to go on stage accompanied by Whirlwind's drummer. There is a roar. It's twenty past ten on the 1st June 1960, as Paolo Zaccagnini wrote in the Messaggero, it's a historic hour for rock, when one of the greatest loved rock and roll groups born from the punk revolution goes on stage in Piazza Maggiore. The London "cellars" get into contact with the Bolognese ones, who give the cue and this is the signal. The stage is affectionately taken by storm by the Kids, while the Centocelle of City Rockers from Rome keep away the hostile punks and the Clash begin an unforgettable concert. Everything really takes off only when Topper Headon arrives a quarter of an hour later, with him shooting behind the drums and then the concert literally explodes. Only a few cans launched against The Clash and all in only a bit of spitting. It's preferred to sing, dance and get excited to show affect towards one of the most beautiful bands in the history of rock.. Dressed in black, Joe Strummer is as tight and nervous as a bow and it's a dramatic representation to which he gives life. He feels and lives rock'n'roll intensely, often singing with his eyes shut and making theatrical movements with his arms. Mick Jones at the edge of the stage playing fantastic guitar chords one after another and often kneels down to speak to the kids below. Paul Simonon, with his head completely shaved, red shirt and trousers with braces is a magnificent skin-head who makes the bass thunder apocalyptically while moving in his wobbly way of walking. Whilst Topper Headon doesn't miss out on anything and sustains everything behind the drums who shoots out blasts and burst again and again. "Clash City Rockers" and the start is inevitable, an electric shock goes down your back, then it's down to "Spanish bombs" and "Jail Guitar Doors". The Spanish bombs thunder in the "disco casino" of Strummer and echo through the bars of the prison cells, whilst Paul Simonon's grasps the guitar and with a hard and warning voice tackles the difficult reggae of "The Guns of Brixton", one of the most successful of the whole concert. London isn't burning yet, like many under the stage are calling. "London Calling" precedes "Jimmy Jazz" and a sparkling "Train in Vain". Noises of crashing with "Clampdown" while we pass from the third to the second album, and Mick Jones shouts out the rebellious howl of "Stay Free" , then it's "English Civil War" to echo. "Una storia di Junior Murvin" says Joe Strummer in a deep voice, and it's a shudder as it's time for "Police and Thieves". Hard and metallic reggae from which we get the hammering rock in "I'm so Bored with U.S.A.", sung with full lungs. Swords of light on the thousands of vibrating heads and hands and on the enormous orange banner at the back of the stage (a shade of "worker" ideals from Ford's realism and Roosevelt's thirties, designed by Tom Lowry of the "New Musical Express" and representing factory chimneys). A few more songs then it's the end, while Paul Simonon breaks his bass, Mick Jones takes off his guitar finishing in heat hitting violently his head and fainting and Joe Strummer jumping as if he is possessed between Topper Headon's drums and the edges of the stage, by this time invaded by the kids in the first rows. The encore is played straight away with the slow and hypnotic reggae of "Armagideon Time" followed straight after by the really violent riff of "Tommy Gun". There aren't blasts of death or victory, but for the four knights of the apocalypse, it's the climax of the unforgettable red hot tracks of the first album. "Janie Jones" is the start of the last blitz, then London starts to burn with "London's Burning" and a distressful yell of "White Riot" comes from out of the flames. It's the end and nerves and lungs have to work hard to get back to a normal

rhythm, and the blood runs more regular than throughout "I Fought The Law" fantastic at half way through the concert with Strummer spitting with hoarse voice anger and submission of "I fought the law, but in the end the law has won", then falling on his knees. Then the Clash disappear, before being surrounded by enthusiastic Kids or journalists looking for quick contacts and there after disappearing into the darkness. The exclusive interview takes place in Strummer's hotel room while the other band members come and go and Joe looks at "Rockerilla" back issues for a long time then agreeing to a long chat for nearly two hours, the best part of which is published by me in "Lotta Continua" a few days later. Joe, "I don't know, it's strange to be here in Bologna, I've been waiting so long for this moment and now I'm dumbfounded. I went out last night and this afternoon, but I would like to stay here for longer. Bologna is so much different to London. There's an old Rolling Stone's song called "Street Fighting Man" which says "What else can a poor boy do in sleepy London apart from playing in a Rock'n'roll band"? I think he's being honest. It's true, there aren't people fighting in the streets. Do you get what I'm saying? There are Punks, Skin-heads, Mods, Teds, Rasta and Rockabilly Rebels who often fight between each other. But they don't get together to fight Margaret Thatcher, there is no organisation. I myself keep away from being organised, I can't stand being organised, I'm a rebel, my own actual life is a testimony to rebellion I lived for years in squalid rooms in frightening districts, without work or money, scraping together two pounds a week playing here or there in the metropolitan underground. In this way I discovered Rock'n'roll, finding myself playing together with others like me in small garages. We are a garage-band and we come from garage-land. I'm not from a poor family, but I went to an awful school, very severe and Victorian where brutality was the rule. There I had to learn to be a rebel. Don't work in a factory, because it will kill you. Burning my life living it intensely. This is what being a rebel is for me and that's what I still do, well or not, maybe uselessly. You see, I'm not a man of great intelligence, I have never understood Marx, even though I have tried to read it many times, but I've always had to give up because each time confused me even more and I'd be happy if someone could explain it to me instead. So I lead my rebellion in this way, these are my politics. It's so every day, every second of my life. What we try to do through music is to discover the truth.. The truth about life. It can be that you go to school, grow-up, find a job, get married, grow old and then…it just can't be like that. Looking for a job, queuing up outside the unemployment office as I did for years, hanging around the streets of London without knowing what to do and in the evening getting drunk and fighting. It can't be like that. I have got my life to live, I prefer to burn . I mean… my ideas are confused, they buzz in my head like bees. They always hurt me" He stops talking, presses his temples, closes his eyes, continuing to smoke one cigarette after another. Then he lifts his head up and continues. "What I want to say is that everything exists and if you want you can take it if you really want to In anyway and whatever it costs". I ask him to talk about the story of their attitude towards terrorists and armed groups, thinking about the famous photo of him wearing a RAF and Red Brigade T-shirt at a concert in Hyde Park, a photo that bewildered many given the bloody mark that terrorism has left on the Italian society in these years. He listened and nodded, then he interrupted me and said: "I can explain the reason for this. I saw what the BR were doing and understood straightaway that I would never have been able to do it. I don't want to kill and I don't wont to be killed. And I said to myself: you will never do that, Joe, your duty is to unite young people, and do it through Rock'n'Roll". Understand? I could never be on their side, but I was fascinated, Their way of seizing a fire arm and make people listen to them fascinated and frightened me. Nobody in England has the courage to do it, and maybe they could have been an example to them. As regards to the T-shirt, I wore it exclusively to be a provocation. We weren't at Hyde Park but Victoria Park, and we were playing for

"Rock against Racism", and even if it was a right thing, to which we took part in for a while, I understood that something wasn't right, political jealousies and exploitations by EMI, who had a contract with the Tom Robinson Band and printed all those T-shirts and badges with the star symbol of RAR". He stops, draws heavily on his cigarette and then imitating Johnny Rotten's voice pronounces "E.M.I.". He carries on. "So I wanted to provoke them and decided to wear that T-shirt with a similar star, but a lot different. They weren't very happy and were offended, after that we broke-up with them. You see, I'm not a politician, but I know where there are lies and I want the truth. The life we are living helps me, because we travel a lot and I see things from different points of view. The problem of terrorism that in London I saw in one way could have been attractive, but now I see that London is only …" He stops, looks around as if he wants an example, then holds his thumb and index finger and carries on: "…a small dot in the world. What to me seemed clear and right isn't anymore. Before I thought that the BR or the RAF and the IRA, represented a way, even if I didn't agree, to revolt .But today I don't believe in this anymore, because it only spreads blood. I know that in Italy killing goes on and that a few days age they killed a communist reporter (obviously Strummer had heard about Walter Tobagi, left-winger) so this is a really bad way of living. Now I understand, before I didn't". He stopped again, deeply drawing on his joint, by now the third. He got up to drink, small and dressed in black, looking like Montgomery Clift, his cinema hero, to whom he dedicated "The Right Profile". I ask him if he finds it wrong that I found comparisons between a scene described in "London's Burning" and one in "Arancia Meccanica [Clockwork Orange]", one of my favourite films. It's a dark and violent place. Referring to the scene you mean, it's the one that you can see going to Mick Jones's flat and one evening we realised how much it is like the one from "Clockwork Orange", so we put it in the words of the song". Paul Simonon comes in, in his wobbling way, looks through "Rockerilla" and asks what time "this fuckin' mister Longo" was speaking. He would like to say something to him about having to anticipate the concert, and having created a lot of problems, especially for the youngsters who couldn't have found out about the change in the program and would arrive the evening after only to find a nasty surprise. I ask if the Brixton rooftops really are full of rifles and he answers: "Oh, not really, that song is serves as an admonishment because we want to keep certain people away from Brixton. In fact, a lot have declared not to". Topper Headon has vanished and Mick Jones arrives accompanied by Elettrolux, who then carries on. "She is a real punk-girl, very intelligent and definite. I met her in the street not long ago". I ask Joe Strummer what he thinks of "1984" by George Orwell. "For us - he says – it's already a sad reality. We haven't got Big Brother, but we have got Big Sister, that is Margaret Thatcher. All the newspapers are with her. That's why I also say "What else can a poor youngster do in sleeping London apart from playing in a rock'n'roll band?" Let this be quite clear. Last night we played this strange, quiet Bologna, so different to London and it was great. We also met some punks who told us they preferred Crass. I tried to understand why, we have spoken. They said we were bastards to play for communists. I have never heard Crass, but I've reading their interviews and I've got nothing against them, they seem to be like us at the beginning, but in a few years they will change certain points of view. What happened last night was fantastic, together with another concert in England some time ago, the biggest of our life. In what I call "my city" it would be impossible, they would arrest us if we played at a concert with tens of thousands of youngsters organised by communists in a big London square. For this it's been a great success. But be careful, when I say "What else can a poor boy do?" It's not an alibi. Rock'n'roll gave me hope and it is a form of culture that gives strength and an identity to youngsters. I loved Elvis Presley very much, and I was disgusted when he died and certain punks in London went round saying "an old whore is dead, we're not bothered

about idols". The same punks who then said, when Sid Vicious died, that Sid was a symbol and would never die, like I read on a wall last night in Bologna. Who wrote that is stupid. For me Elvis wasn't a idol, he was a man and a rock'n'roller, who I loved, like Buddy Holly, a real artist, like the Rolling Stones, of "Not fade away". But Elvis was the greatest, him of "That's alright mama" and other great rock'n'roll songs and rockabilly. As regarding Sid, well really is dead and it's no good trying to bluff it's not true. It's a mythical way of acting, just like the damn ones from the "Sun" who, when he died stamped the whole first page saying "Sid Vicious is dead. The number 1 punk! See what happens?" That's how idols are built, but with punk we don't want anymore idols. I'm not a hero, I'm on my own, and it took me a long time to realise this, I'm on my own…just a fuckin' "somebody". First he stops, then lowers his head, holds up it again and looks at me. I ask what he thinks about the famous line made by Neil Young about Elvis Presley and Johnny Rotten. He nods, smiles and asks if it's OK if he doesn't comment. "I with Johnny want to follow the motto "Live and let live". I prefer not to speak". I insist. "Well, I think that Johnny Rotten can well be forgotten, and in his place there's John Lydon, who I don't understand much, but I know is intelligent and I think that he should allowed to get on, and that PIL will do good stuff, even if, I today don't understand him". I ask if he remembers the title of James Dean's first film "Sure it was "Rebel without a cause". I'm not like that. I am a rebel, but I've got a reason, I know exactly what I want and I use my head, I don't get pulled by the fashion, a thing which is very frequent in London and a source of vanity and if someone hits me I hit back twice as hard. As Ivan says "the harder they come, the harder they fall". But how many of us are left? Sid is dead, with a needle stuck in a vein and there's nothing glorious about that. He was a great boy, and I have never recognised him in the way certain punks and newspapers mythologised him. And the others? Johnny Rotten's gone, Captain and Dave Vanian are in a blind dead-end. Maybe, only we've been able to hold on hard and so we carry on. I don't know how long. I don't care about the things that the press and our record company say. "The only band that matters" is how they described us. It's all crap from our record company. In England, we don't sell a lot, Margaret Thatcher's press hate us, and only just recently have we started to do well in Scandinavia or in Holland. But in Germany of France who are we? We're big in America, and we've sold so many records that it seems unbelievable. There are always loads of kids at our concerts and all know our songs like "I'm so bored with the U.S.A.", which they wanted to censor but we played first every evening for months and months. But what counts, isn't the fact that we sell lots of records but the fact that we can play the rock'n'roll we want and help people to wake up. I learnt this from Bo Diddley, with him we did an unforgettable tour last year. Using your head and not letting yourself get influenced by those who talk more. He really is a rock'n'roller, an authentic "rude boy", even if he is fifty years old, not like many who do ska and rude boys. I love reggae and ska and hate the necrophiliacs of ska. I learnt the same thing from Pete Townshend, who even come to play with us once. He's the antithesis of the rock star Pete, a true artist who is very sensible about what kids do today, what he was fifteen years ago. I ask if they have ever played in Jamaica or if they would do. "It wouldn't make sense, we would only be a snail band of whites going to an island pretending to play reggae in a place where they play it better then us anyway" What is China, a recurring word in Clash's songs? "It's a fascinating, legendary place where we would soon like to go and play" And is it true that your music is remembers the first Rolling Stones and Who? "A lot of people say this, so there is some truth in it. We've got nothing to do with the Rolling Stones of today, we're really oppressived (he holds his head in his hands) and really lunatic". The journalist looks for an effective ending and asks where does the road for the Clash lead to. Joe smiles and refuses to give a rhetoric answer, even though without realising, he gives one even more significant about the type of band

that The Clash are. "I don't know, I only know that tomorrow we will be in Turin, and maybe, the day after tomorrow in Berlin. That's all I can say, that's all I want to know". He stops and then continues. "I also know that Turin is one of the biggest working class cities in Europe, so our banner will have a precise meaning. Saying that, that is reality, a hard reality. Like our music is, from when we started playing years ago in the smallest punk localities in London or in front of the factories in the North of England. Do you know the old blues song of Mississipi that goes "Sixteen tons I've carried today and sixteen tons I'll carry tomorrow, but the day will come in which those sixteen tons…"? (He tightens his fists while he sings quietly and mimes breaking down a wall). We will go on like that until we still have the strength to run. "know yourself" Socrates said and to me this has always seemed like a good motto. This is what really counts".